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Waters, Chester Campbell

State commissions on economy and efficiency

Providence

1915

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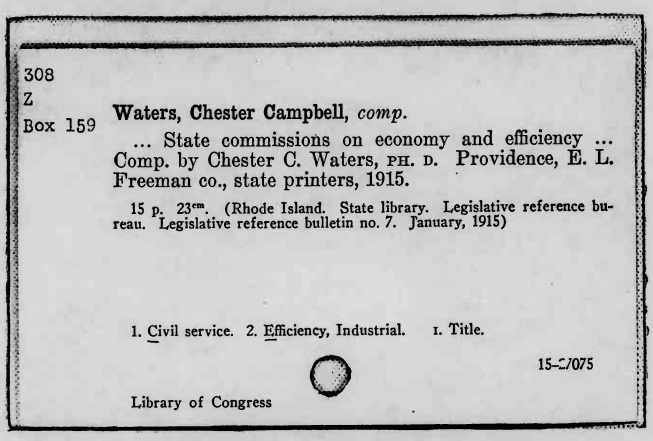

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... State commissions on economy and efficiency ... Comp. by Chester C. Waters, PH. D. Providence, E. L. Freeman co., state printers, 1915.

15 p. 23cm. (Rhode Island. State library. Legislative reference bureau. Legislative reference bulletin no. 7. January, 1915)

1. Civil service. 2. Efficiency, Industrial. I. Title.

15-27075

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STATE COMMISSIONS

ON

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INTRODUCTION.

The growing importance of the subject of economy and efficiency in connection with State government is well illustrated by the accompanying bulletin compiled by Dr. Waters. It is hoped that the information contained therein may be of value and interest to the members of the General Assembly.

HERBERT OLIN BRIGHAM,

State Librarian.

Sept 14 Dec 1924

STATE COMMISSIONS ON ECONOMY AND EFFICIENCY.

In response to the increasingly intelligent demand for economy in public affairs, special commissions have been appointed in thirteen states to study the organization and administration of the State governments. Various methods of procedure are prescribed for these commissions, but they are all instructed to bring in recommendations looking toward greater economy and efficiency in the transaction of the business of the states. Most of these commissions are to submit recommendations to the legislatures meeting in 1915. Practically all have published preliminary reports, setting forth the general drift of their conclusions and inviting discussion thereon. A summary of the instructions given these commissions and a review of their preliminary reports should prove of interest to anyone who finds points to criticise in the administration of our State governments.

Three of these commissions,—in Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Dakota,—have confined their efforts to conducting an audit of the books of the various departments of the State government. The work of audit has been done by public accountants and the results accomplished include, in addition to the recovery of some money lost through carelessness and dishonesty, the adoption of changes in bookkeeping procedure which should prevent such loss in the future.

In six states the commissions have been mainly engaged in studying the structure of the State government and drafting plans for reorganization. In one of these, Nebraska, the chief attention has been paid to the problems confronting the legislature and several changes in procedure as well as the introduction of a constitutional amendment providing for a unicameral legislature are recommended. The Pennsylvania commission is making a survey of the organization and administration of the existing departments. In Illinois, Iowa,

Minnesota and New Jersey the chief criticism is aimed at the multiplicity of the existing offices and departments. These commissions recommend a consolidation of the numerous executive boards, commissions and offices into from three to twelve large departments, each under the jurisdiction of a chief appointed by and responsible to the governor. In some of the states it is recommended that unpaid boards be appointed to advise the salaried chief of each department. The advantages of such consolidation are pointed out to be an actual saving in salaries, office rent, printing, etc., and the establishment of definite lines of responsibility converging on the governor, bringing about harmony in the policy of the administration, effective supervision, ease in the preparation of a proper budget and trustworthiness in reporting to the governor, the legislature and the public.

In the four remaining states,—Ohio, New York, Wisconsin and Massachusetts,—permanent commissions are studying the functions rather than the structure of the State governments. They have been making various special investigations and studying departmental requests for appropriations with a view to bringing about a more economical expenditure of the money of the State. In Ohio a Budget Commissioner with a small staff is putting the departmental estimates into budget form for the governor to present to the legislature. New York's Department of Efficiency and Economy has made some seven hundred special investigations and is using the information thus obtained in preparing the budget for the Board of Estimate. The Wisconsin Board of Public Affairs has made some extensive studies of the problems confronting the State, including a comparative study of budget procedure in the various states and foreign countries which was published in 1912. The Massachusetts Commission on Economy and Efficiency has recently been reorganized so that the state auditor is no longer a member. Beside making numerous investigations at the request of the governor and legislature, this commission has prepared a careful report on the functions and organization of the State departments and plans to make a preliminary report on the budget early in 1915.

ILLINOIS. Sess. Laws, 1913, p. 622. Resolution Approved April, 1913.

TITLE:—Committee to investigate the departments of State government.

ORGANIZATION:—Four senators and four representatives.

POWERS AND DUTIES:—To investigate all departments of the State government, including all boards, bureaus and commissions which have been created by the General Assembly; such investigation to be made with a view of securing a more perfect system of accounting, combining and centralizing the duties of the various departments, abolishing such as are useless, and securing for the State of Illinois such reorganization as will promote greater efficiency and greater economy in her various branches of government.

To have full authority to employ expert accountants, attorneys, stenographers, and other assistants necessary.

APPROPRIATION:—$40,000. (Laws, 1913, p. 113.)

REPORT:—Preliminary report made to General Assembly, June 18, 1914.

Recommends reorganization into not more than twelve departments, each chief being appointed by the governor.

"More or less natural grouping of the existing 100 departments into the following sub-divisions:"

Finance administration.
Education.
Charitable and correctional institutions.
Public works and conservation.
Agricultural agencies.
Labor and mining agencies.
Public health and safety.
Control of corporations.
Law officers.
State militia.
Miscellaneous.

Recommends preparation of budget by governor and heads of departments.

"Such a reorganization as is here recommended should bring about greater harmony between the executive and legislative branches of the State government. The governor will have authority over the whole executive organization and means for enforcing his authority, . . . and may properly be held responsible for its conduct."

IOWA. Sess. Laws, 1913, p. 427. Resolution No. 9; Feb. 6, 1913.

TITLE:—Joint Committee on Retrenchment and Reform. (Standing Committee.)

ORGANIZATION:—Chairman of Committees on Ways and Means, Judiciary and Appropriations, and two members of the minority party in the Senate and in the House.

POWERS AND DUTIES:—Authorized to employ accountants and efficiency engineers to assist in the inquiry into the affairs of the State authorized by statute;

Authorized to institute such changes in the administration of public affairs as will promote efficiency and economy.

APPROPRIATION:—$10,000. (Laws, 1913. p. 23.)

Recommendations of the committee on retrenchment and reform of the thirty-fifth General Assembly.

REPORT:—To the thirty-sixth assembly. Nov. 12, 1914.

RECOMMENDATIONS:—

GENERAL ORGANIZATION:—Secretary of state, auditor, and treasurer, elected, to perform specific duties attached to those offices.

Governor to appoint heads of department of social progress, department of industries, department of public safety.

BUDGET:—Heads of departments to prepare estimates for governor.

Also recommends that number of legislative clerks, etc., be reduced, the size and number of legislative committees be changed and the travel of legislative bills and amendments be noted.

LOUISIANA. Sess. Laws, 1914, p. 607. Approved July 9, 1914.

TITLE:—Legislative Investigating Committee.

ORGANIZATION:—Seven members—two elected from house, one from senate; two appointed from general assembly by governor; one appointed by speaker; one appointed by lieutenant governor.

Members to receive $10 per day and expenses.

POWERS AND DUTIES:—To investigate past and present conduct of the affairs of the government of Louisiana in all its departments,—including the refunding of the state's bonded indebtedness and sale of such bonds, sale of lands in the year 1898 by the Tensas Levee Board, etc., with the principal object of correcting and remedying any abuses or evils and promoting efficiency.

APPROPRIATION:—$20,000.

REPORT:—To report to the governor on or before the first Monday of August, 1915.

MASSACHUSETTS. Sess. Laws, 1912, Ch. 719, p. 800. Approved June 6, 1912. Amended 1914, Ch. 698, p. 715. Approved June 25, 1914.

TITLE:—Commission on Economy and Efficiency.

ORGANIZATION:—Chairman, designated by governor, at $5,000; two other members appointed by governor at $4,500 each per annum.

TERM:—Three years; one appointed each year.

POWERS AND DUTIES:—To examine annual estimates of the various departments. To make special examination of any matter affecting the finances of any department at the request of the general court, the ways and means committee, governor, or committee on finance of the governor's council, or upon its own initiative.

To inquire into laws governing financial transactions, to study possibility of promoting greater economy and efficiency and utility in transaction of business, by changes in law, by reorganization of

departments, by different methods of administration, by classification of employees, by fixing maximum and minimum salaries, by organizing central purchasing agency, by substitution of budget method . . . and to report from time to time to the governor and the general court.

APPROPRIATION:—$35,130 for year ending Nov. 30, 1914. (A. & R. 1914, Ch. 4; Ch. 775 and Ch. 796.)

REPORT:—Annual report made to the general court at end of calendar year. Review of work of year.

"Report on reorganization of boards and commissions having supervision and control of state institutions." Feb. 7, 1914.

"Report on Functions, Organization and Administration of the Departments in the Executive Branch of the State Government." (Based on questionaire dated August 11, 1913.) Made to governor. November, 1914.

REMARKS:—The commission expects to make a preliminary report on the budget in the early part of 1915.

MINNESOTA. Preliminary report of May 25, 1914.

TITLE:—The Economy and Efficiency Commission.

ORGANIZATION:—Commission of thirty men chosen by the governor serving without pay, who have raised by private subscription the funds necessary for general expenses. Appointed October, 1913.

POWERS AND DUTIES:—To confer with public officials and private citizens and devise plans for promoting efficiency and economy in the administration of the State government.

APPROPRIATION:—None.

REPORT:—Preliminary Report of the Economy and Efficiency Commission. Made to the governor. Dated May 25, 1914.

Main features of plan:

I. Reorganization of the executive service:
   a. General administration and finance.
   b. Public domain.
   c. Public welfare.
      1. Institutions.
      2. Health.
   d. Education.
   e. Labor and commerce.
   f. Agriculture.

II. The merit system in the civil service.

III. The budget system of appropriating money.

REMARKS:—The final report will be submitted to the 1915 legislature in the form of a bill. A committee from the State bar association has assisted in drafting this bill.

MISSISSIPPI. Laws Ex. Sess. 1913, Ch. 5. Approved June 13, 1913.

TITLE:—Joint Legislative Investigating Committee.

ORGANIZATION:—Two members of the senate, three members of the house, each body to elect its own members of the committee.

Compensation of members, $15 per day and expenses.

POWERS AND DUTIES:—To investigate State offices, State officers, State institutions, State boards and departments of the State government, except the penitentiary.

Empowered to summon witnesses and compel their attendance; to compel the production of books, papers and documents; to employ agents, stenographers and special accountants, and to do all things necessary to be done in connection with its work in the examination of the accounts, or the investigation of any official, officers, etc.

APPROPRIATION:—$5,000. (Note:—$20,365 additional made available.) (Laws, 1914, Ch. 80, p. 70.)

REPORT:—Made to 1914 legislature.

Main features:

Audit of all departments by public accountants.

The committee expects to recover about $8,000.

NEBRASKA. Resolution of April 16, 1913.

TITLE:—Joint committee to consider the reform of legislative procedure and the budget.

ORGANIZATION:—Three members of the senate and three members of the house.

POWERS AND DUTIES:—To make a careful study of methods of legislative procedure in other states and countries, including the preparation of the budget.

To formulate a report and recommendations for the State of Nabraska.

APPROPRIATION:—$500. (Laws, 1913, p. 691.)

REPORT:—Issued by the Nebraska Legislative Reference Bureau as Bulletin No. 4, dated May 15, 1914.

"Reform of Legislative Procedure and the Budget in Nebraska."

Contents—

Recommendations for immediate action:

1. Bills.
   Form to be standardized; a bill drafting division to be created.
2. Legislative publications.
   Journals and calendars should be printed.
3. Committees.
   Reduction in size and number, schedule of meetings, record of votes.
4. Employees.
   Reduction in number, election of chief.

Recommendations for future action:

1. Constitutional amendment for unicameral legislature.
2. Civil service reform.
3. Budget to be prepared by the governor.
4. Consolidation of offices.
5. Efficiency survey.

NEW JERSEY. Sess. Laws, 1912, No. 6, p. 945. Approved April 1, 1912.

TITLE:—Commission to report upon the advisability of reorganization and consolidation of the different departments of the State government whose functions are interrelated.

ORGANIZATION:—Two senators appointted by the president of the senate, two representatives appointed by the speaker, and three citizens appointed by the governor.

POWERS AND DUTIES:—To consider the best means to consolidate various boards and to broaden the powers in one or more central boards.

APPROPRIATION:—$5,000.

REPORT:—Second report, made to governor and legislature. February 16, 1914.

1. Scope of work.
   At the time of making this report the commission had investigated some forty offices and departments.
   Reorganizations and consolidations recommended should save the State $146,811.09 annually.
2. General plan of reorganization.
   Consolidation under director with unpaid advisory board.
3. Special recommendations.
   Civil service commission to standardize salaries.
   State house commission to standardize stationery.

NEW YORK. Sess. Laws, 1913, Ch. 280, p. 506. April 14, 1913.

TITLE:—State Department of Efficiency and Economy.

ORGANIZATION:—Commissioner, appointed by governor; salary, $12,000. May appoint such deputies, clerks, assistants, experts and employees as he may deem necessary and fix their salaries and compensation.

POWERS AND DUTIES:—To make a careful and thorough study of each office and report to the governor. To examine accounts, methods of business, accounting and administration of the several departments.

To require information in regard to the departmental estimates in a prescribed form, to examine these estimates and make recommendations to the legislature to assist in the preparation of the budget.

Commissioner is secretary of the State Board of Estimate.

APPROPRIATION:—$200,000 for year 1913–14. (Laws, 1913, p. 2098.)

REPORT:—State budget report. Made to governor. March 19, 1914.

Description of work of department, pp. 28–30.

Reports 354 separate examinations made between May, 1913, and March, 1914.

REMARKS:—During November, 1914, the department was engaged in the following work:

Making a survey of the structure of the State government.

Analyzing budget requests.

Making special investigations—some 700 to date.

Governor Sulzer appointed a Committee of Inquiry in January, 1913, which made a hurried examination of departmental estimates and reported in March, 1913, recommending the creation of a department of efficiency and economy.

OHIO. Sess. Laws, 1913, p. 658. Approved May 6, 1913.

TITLE:—Budget Commissioner.

ORGANIZATION:—Commissioner, examiner and secretary.

POWERS AND DUTIES:—Governor may appoint competent persons to examine the affairs of any department, to ascertain facts, and to make findings and recommendations relative to increasing the efficiency and curtailing the expense thereof.

Governor to present State budget to the general assembly at the beginning of the session. Departments to submit estimates to governor by November 15 of the even numbered years. Auditor to submit information in regard to the condition of the various accounts at the same time.

APPROPRIATION:—$15,000. (Laws, 1913, p. 600.)

REPORT:—This office receives the departmental estimates and reports upon them to the governor.

PENNSYLVANIA. Sess. Laws, 1913, p. 1260. Resolution approved July 25, 1913.

TITLE:—The Economy and Efficiency Commission.

ORGANIZATION:—Three members appointed by the governor at salaries of $3,000 each.

POWERS AND DUTIES:—To investigate the number, character of duties and compensation of all persons in the employ of the State; and to ascertain what changes, if any, may be necessary to secure greater uniformity, economy and efficiency in the work of the various departments, branches, bureaus and commissions of the government of this State.

APPROPRIATION:—$25,000, cut to $10,000 by the governor.

REPORT:—To be made to the governor not later than November 1, 1914, with such recommendations and suggestions as the commission deems proper.

REMARKS:—Commission has made a study of acts creating and regulating the different departments and of duties prescribed for and actually performed by the various employees; and a tabulation of expenses of all departments and the results accomplished by departments doing similar work.

SOUTH DAKOTA. Sess. Laws, 1913, p. 383. Approved March 13, 1913.

TITLE:—Special Investigating Committee.

ORGANIZATION:—The governor and a joint committee of the assembly to appoint a non-partisan committee of three persons, who are to receive $10 per day and expenses.

POWERS AND DUTIES:—To investigate into the financial condition and conduct of every State office, State institution and department of the State.

Examination to cover the past twenty years.

APPROPRIATION:—$12,000.

REPORT:—Committee to report its findings after the completion of the investigation in any one department to the governor; and a full report of findings, including recommendations, to the fourteenth session of the assembly.

WISCONSIN. Sess. Laws, 1913, p. 1021. Approved July 1, 1913. (Amending Sess. Laws, 1911, p. 743.)

TITLE:—Board of Public Affairs.

ORGANIZATION:—The governor, secretary of state, president of senate, speaker of assembly, chairman of finance committee of assembly, chairman of finance committee of senate and three other persons appointed by the governor with approval of senate. No compensation.

POWERS AND DUTIES:—May appoint and employ a secretary and such experts and employees as may be found necessary.

To have such supervision of every public body as may be necessary to secure uniformity and accuracy of accounts. May prescribe use of standards and records of efficiency of employees. Shall inaugurate adequate systems of examination and inspection of accounts.

To devise adequate uniform system of accounts; prepare a financial budget; and investigate feasibility of establishing a central department of purchase.

To make special investigations before September 1, 1914, as follows:

(a) The efficiency of the organization and administration of public bodies and to formulate plans for the greater coördination of such public bodies.
(b) The feasibility of a central board of control for all public educational institutions.
(c) The efficiency of teaching methods in higher schools.
(d) The efficiency and cost of State printing.
(e) Other matters for the purpose of bringing about greater efficiency and economy in every public body, advancing the economic betterment of the State and of promoting public welfare.

APPROPRIATION:—$40,000 annually for three years. (Laws, 1913, p. 1024.)

REPORT:—Special reports received, made in 1912.
"The Budget." "The Rural School Problem Dissolved."
"Preliminary Report on Conditions and Needs of Rural Schools."
"A Plan for a Coöperative Neighborhood." "State Loans to Farmers."
"Report upon Coöperation and Marketing."

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